

dialogue

The Staff Newsletter of the Ministry of Community and Social Services

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Lynn Graham photo

Minister David Tsubouchi announced the work-for-welfare program at Firemen's Park in Niagara Falls on June 12. The site of the announcement is a volunteer-run recreation area in need of improvements such as painting and repairs — the type of project that would be ideal for Ontario Works. The Regional Municipality of Niagara Falls is one of the first 20 sites.

Ontario Works begins in September

The government's new work-for-welfare program will be phased in starting with 20 sites in September and will be province-wide within two years. Minister David Tsubouchi announced June 12.

The program will help social assistance recipients break the cycle of dependence and give something back to their communities. Communities will benefit from the projects, he added.

People receiving social assistance who are able to work will be required to work on community projects to earn their welfare cheques. The minister said work for welfare will benefit recipients by helping them acquire skills, self-confidence and contacts that will assist them in finding a job.

The sites for the first phase were selected from submissions made by municipalities around the province. The second phase will be announced this fall. Full details were included in the ministry-wide e-mail sent to all staff on June 12.

The first 20 sites for Ontario Works are: the municipalities served by the Algoma District Social Services Board (which includes Elliot Lake, Wawa, Thessalon and Blind River), Brant County, City of Brockville, City of Cornwall, County of Dufferin, Regional Municipality of Durham, Regional Municipality of Halton, Regional Municipality of Hamilton-

Wentworth, Huron County, Kent County, District of Muskoka, Regional Municipality of Niagara, Nipissing District Social Services Board (which covers 14 municipalities in the district, including Sturgeon Falls, Mattawa and Corbeil), City of North Bay, Northumberland County, Oxford County, Regional Municipality of Peel, City of Timmins, Regional Municipality of Waterloo and the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry.

On June 18, the minister also announced a re-organization of ministry employment programs into a program of supports, including job placement, designed to help people on welfare get into paid employment.

Those who are ready for employment may be referred to private-sector or non-profit job placement agencies which will be contracted by the ministry on a fee-for-performance basis. Such agencies will receive a maximum of \$1,200 for successfully placing a single employable person in a job.

Ontario Works offices will become the hub for all our employment-related programs and will give recipients access to the tools they need to find a job or find the training they need, the minister said. These include computer job banks, fax machines, computer to generate résumés and trained staff to offer advice.



Donna Gault photo

Nancy Wright (centre) was the recipient of the 1995 Goldberg Award for Clinical Excellence. With her are Dr. Ben Goldberg, for whom the award is named, and Dr. Barbara Richardson, director of the Home Visiting Program for Infants.

The Wright stuff

Nancy Wright has been named the recipient of the 1995 Goldberg Award for Clinical Excellence at Child and Parent Resource Institute (CPRI) in London.

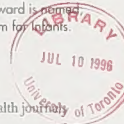
Nancy is being honoured for exemplary clinical practice in psychology with emotionally and behaviourally disturbed children. The award — named for longtime CPRI clinical director Dr. Ben Goldberg, who left CPRI in 1988 after 28 years — also recognizes Nancy's development and teaching of a renowned social skills program, and her research and leadership in these areas of practice. Nancy has been published in two

professional mental health journals since 1994.

A highlight of Nancy's practice is the instrumental role she played in the development and implementation of a program for underprivileged children — a social skills camp — in collaboration with the city of London's parks and recreation department and other agencies, providing a model of partnership between CPRI and the London community.

Nancy was presented with the award on May 16.

The award was established in 1989; the winner is selected by an awards committee.



Nominate now for the Amethyst Award

The deadline for nominations for the fourth annual Amethyst Award program for outstanding achievement by Ontario public servants is July 12.

Any member of the Ontario Public Service can nominate or be nominated. Nominees can be any individual, group or partnership working in the OPS who has made an exceptional contribution to public service on the job.

There are four categories in which you may nominate:

- Client Service: for example, exceeding client expectations of service; consistently using imagination and initiative to meet client needs.
- Innovation: creating innovative or breakthrough services, programs or opportunities; using leading-edge

technologies to improve services/programs.

- Valuing People: demonstrating sensitivity to the needs of individuals; soliciting feedback and participation in decision-making.
- Professional Achievement: demonstrating outstanding technical or professional leadership; extending the boundaries of knowledge.

Recipients are selected by an independent committee

appointed by the Secretary of Cabinet Rita Burak.

A brochure was included with your May 30 pay cheque. If you need further information, contact Ontario Honours and Awards at 416-314-7526.



It's back to the 'Fifties for Family and Friends Day

by Susan Best



Fred Godbois and his parents are ready for the barbecue at Family and Friends Day.

For almost 45 years, Rideau Regional Centre in Smiths Falls has had some sort of summer event where our residents invite their families and friends to spend the day. For as long as I have worked at the centre, and for years before, it has been held the first Saturday in June, rain or shine.

This year's Family and Friends Day saw sunny skies and lots of visitors. The theme was a return to the '50s with lots of full skirts, pony-tails and square dancers, a barbershop quartet and ice-cream stands throughout the centre. The day's events included a meeting of the Rideau Regional Centre Association, a multi-faith chapel service, swimming in the centre's pool, departmental displays in the gym and

numerous barbecues around the centre.

Early in the afternoon, everyone was invited to the auditorium for a variety show. Rideau has a very talented staff group that put a great deal of hard work into this two-hour show. As well as our own staff, we are always grateful to those folks from the Smiths Falls community who come out every year to help with the entertainment.

After all the work to get ready for this event, the most rewarding part of the day is seeing those people who come every year catching up on their news and watching the residents enjoying their time visiting with their families and friends.

Susan Best is the communications co-ordinator at Rideau Regional Centre.

PLAIN LANGUAGE PLEASE

Some more words that are better choices in your everyday work:

Instead of:	Use:
finalize	complete
emotionalism	emotion
dependency	dependence
utilize	use
assist	help
obtain	get
inform, notify	tell
is required to	must
relating to	about

Need some more help with your writing? Take a look at the Ministry Manuals Guidelines (MMG) manual in ENMA, available through your DEC account. It explains how to plan, develop, write and produce manuals in both paper and electronic formats. There are excellent guidelines on good writing, including lists of stilted, wasteful and archaic words you should avoid using. It's all in Tab 04, **Procedure Writing**. To get to this manual through your Allin1 account: log on, then type MA (Ministry Applications) and return, type MPM and return, then MMG and return.

A vision for social services

DOING BETTER FOR LESS

INTRODUCING ONTARIO'S BUSINESS PLANS

A project to protect priority services within a more affordable, innovative government

Visit our web site



The MCSS home page on the Internet

Freedom of Information and Privacy Office's web page and updates on government/union negotiations.

You can find the MCSS home page (the starting point for the web site, similar to a

table of contents) by typing <http://www.gov.on.ca/CSS>. The "gov.on.ca" part stands for Government of Ontario, Canada; be sure to use capital letters for "CSS."

The site will be regularly updated with news about the ministry, including province-wide news releases and the text of minister's statements in the Legislature. Material there is available in English and in French.

The site was developed and is maintained by the Communications and Marketing Branch.

The ministry's vision and mission is to provide "an affordable and effective services system that supports and invests in families and communities to make them responsible and accountable, in adults to make them as independent as possible; a services system in which children are safe and people most in need receive support."

In **Doing Better for Less**, the government's business plan for all ministries released May 28 (and sent on e-mail the same day), the government said its key strategies for MCSS are a restructuring of social services and a fundamental transformation of social assistance and employment programs. The latter includes the work-for-welfare program for employable people, a guaranteed support plan for seniors and people

with disabilities, and streamlining the delivery of social assistance.

The document outlined three core businesses for MCSS:

1. Provision of a policy, legislative and fiscal framework for social services.
2. Management of an affordable, effective social services system. These services include funding for child care; child protection services; children's mental health services; young offender services; services and supports for children with disabilities; services for adults with developmental disabilities; and shelter and counselling for victims of violence against women and their children.
3. Management of a social assistance system that is based on incentives for economic independence and assists in providing essential supports to those most in need.

Info over the phone

A telephone info-line on the collective agreement between the government and the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) is now available on the Ontario Communications Network.

The number to call is 416-327-4262 in Metro Toronto or toll-free elsewhere, 1-888-761-0002. You need a touch-tone phone to use this service. Your choices are: for a brief

overview of the collective agreement, press 1; surplus notice and pay-in-lieu of notice, press 2; voluntary exit option and job matching, press 3; employment stability including displacement or bumping, press 4; pension entitlements, press 5; salary and benefits, press 6.

You can also see the complete text of the collective agreement on the Internet at <http://www.gov.on.ca>.

A reminder

Just a reminder about benefits:

- **Social Contract days:** Where your wages have already been deducted for Social Contract days, you now have until Sept. 30 to take this time off. This applies to all staff represented by OPSEU.
- **Pension buy-back:** OPSEU employees can buy back pension credits that were lost during the March strike. The deadline to do

so is Mar. 31, 1997. The government will contribute the employer's share. The employer and OPSEU Pension Trust are currently working out the administrative details and an announcement will be made as soon as these are available.

If you have any questions about these or other human resources topics, contact your HR office.

Stories and photos by Julia Naczynski

News from the Spring Adoption Resource Exchange

The Spring Adoption Resource Exchange, sponsored by the ministry's Adoption Unit, was held at Queen's Park Apr. 21-23. Adoption workers from across Ontario meet twice a year at this gathering in search of adoptive homes for children. This event is also an opportunity to broaden the workers' knowledge on topics that affect adoption. At the Spring ARE, speakers from the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto were invited; one topic was HIV and AIDS and how it affects families; another was birth defects and substance abuse. Here we provide a synopsis of these two talks.

Help for mothers at risk



Anne Pastuszak

The baseline risk for a child to be born with a major birth defect due to chance alone is between one and three per cent. These

odds exist even when the expectant mother has not had any exposure to such hazards as cigarettes, alcohol or drugs.

But even if a major hazard is present during a pregnancy, it is often difficult to determine with certainty that the hazard was the cause of the defect, adoption workers were told at the Spring Adoption Resource Exchange.

Anne Pastuszak, assistant director of the Motherisk Program at the Hospital for Sick Children, spoke with adoption workers about the Motherisk clinic, which counsels women about risks in pregnancy. Adoption workers are interested in this subject because many of the children available for adoption have physical or health problems from birth.

Motherisk's multi-disciplinary team is the only clinic of its kind in Canada. Since 1985 the clinic has counselled pregnant women about the possible effects of drugs, chemicals, radiation and infections on their unborn children.

The fact is that almost any substance, if there is sufficient exposure, can have a negative effect — even vitamins when taken in large doses, said Anne. Karnofsky's Law of teratology states that abnormal development can occur if the right dose is given to the right species at the right time.

Even given these odds, the clinical benefit of drug therapy to the mother may outweigh the risk to the fetus, said Anne. What needs to be

determined is how much benefit is enough to justify the risks. For example, between 1952 and 1955, thalidomide was prescribed to pregnant women to help overcome the nausea and vomiting associated with the pregnancy itself; unfortunately the medication caused malformations in some children.

A few of the known human teratogens (malformation-causing substances) include anti-convulsants, anti-cancers, lithium (used to treat depression) and high-dose radiation (used to treat cancers).

Despite continuing research, we cannot always pinpoint the causes of birth defects because many of the characteristics of one syndrome can be applied to other syndromes as well, said Anne. For example, the features of fetal alcohol syndrome — such as attention and memory problems, learning disability and hyperactivity — can also be due to other causes. Even the term "crack baby" — a child born with defects characteristic of maternal cocaine use during pregnancy — cannot be said to exist, because there is no definitive or unique syndrome



associated with cocaine use during pregnancy, said Anne.

It's now possible to measure cocaine in a hair sample from a newborn who was exposed to cocaine in utero and to obtain a dose response reading, Anne said.

Care for children in families with HIV/AIDS



Robyn Salter Goldie

For families living with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, life is filled with uncertainty and many unanswered questions.

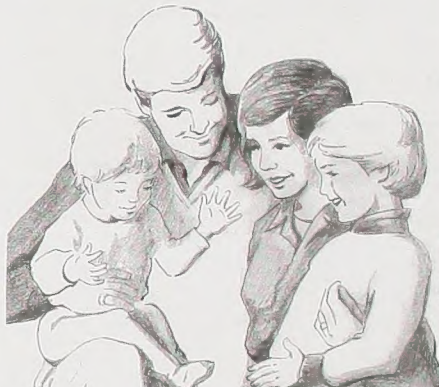
Should we tell the

children? Who else should we tell? If it's Mom or Dad who has HIV, how will the children be cared for if parents become ill or die? How will we manage the family's health care

down to eight per cent if taken during the end of the pregnancy, through the delivery and given to the newborn baby.

A definitive test result for the baby could be available as early as four months of age. This is based on four negative test results taken at about one-month intervals, or two positive results that show the child is HIV-positive.

Infants can become infected through breast milk, but HIV has not been reported to be contracted through a bite, a wound or other injury, Robyn said. The virus is transmitted through sexual contact,



...finances...child care...schooling...long-term care for the children?

The HIV Comprehensive Care Program at the Hospital for Sick Children helps families trying to cope with the implications of HIV and AIDS. Its clients include families in

which a parent has HIV or AIDS, children who have HIV or AIDS, and their uninfected siblings.

Robyn Salter Goldie, a social worker with the program, told adoption workers at the Spring Adoption Resource Exchange that not all children born to mothers who are HIV-positive will have HIV themselves; about 75 per cent of such

children will test negative. "Even when a pregnant woman tests positive, new treatments are available that can reduce the odds of giving birth to an HIV-positive baby," she said. AZT, an experimental drug, can help reduce the risk from 25 per cent

from mother to baby during pregnancy or delivery, sharing intravenous needles for drug use or blood transfusions given before November 1985.

In nuclear families where one parent is infected, the other parent can usually plan to care for the children if his/her spouse dies. But when both parents are infected, and no other family members can care for the children, families need to plan for the children's future care. We need to work with families and Children's Aid to identify foster or adoptive homes for such children while they are still living with their parents. The foster or adoptive families could or can provide much-needed relief for parents with HIV/AIDS during times of illness and eventually take over the care of the children if the parents die.

World-wide, many child welfare agencies are developing pilot programs to identify foster homes for such children while they are still living at home, which can provide relief for the parents and children during times of crisis.

People and Places

The Alexandria Satellite Office has closed. The Hawkesbury Local Office can be contacted instead at 613-632-1171 (see page 177 of the Government of Ontario Telephone Directory).

Malcolm

McDougall retired at the end of March as manager of Occupational Health and Safety Section in Human Resources Branch.

He held that position for seven years of his 26-year career in the OPS. Prior to joining us, Malcolm was with the Ministry of Transportation (Department of Highways). He plans to



enjoy golf and gardening in his retirement.

Ron Murray is taking early retirement in mid-June and is leaving his position as co-ordinator of the Information Unit of Management Support Branch. He joined the Ministry of Health in 1992 and then joined MCSS at the Southeast Regional Office (Kingston) the next year. Prior to that, he was at Queen's University for 12 years.

Jeff Bond has left Information Systems Branch, where he was co-ordinator in Policy and Planning, for a similar position in Australia.

Certified safe in your workplace

by Ana Milojovic-Elms, Occupational Hygiene and Safety Advisor

HEALTH
AND
SAFETY

MCSS currently has 64 joint health and safety committees (JHSCs) representing such diverse workplaces as facilities for the developmentally handicapped and income maintenance offices.

Changes made to the **Occupational Health and Safety Act** in 1990 created the Workplace Health and Safety Agency, which is responsible for developing certification training for JHSC members. Employers in Ontario were also required to send and pay for two members (one worker and one management) from each committee to attend certification training.

The training consists of Core Certification and Workplace-Specific Hazard Training. To date, only Core Certification training has been developed. Almost every committee at MCSS has sent designated members to attend core training. The ministry should be proud of this achievement.

Core training allows participants to obtain a general knowledge of workplace health and safety, well as an

understanding of their rights and responsibilities under the act. The intent of providing this knowledge to the certified members is to give them the knowledge to recognize dangerous circumstances as defined in the act, as well as to enable them to be a resource to the rest of the committee.

Recently, changes have been made to both the agency (its functions have been transferred to the Workers' Compensation Board) and to the Core Certification training program itself. The core training program has been reduced from three categories to two. The former one-week session is now four days (Category 1) and the new Category 2 is seven days. However, the requirement for having certified members remains, and as members leave the committee, replacement certified members must be trained.

Certification training has strengthened the internal responsibility system. Everybody in the workplace benefits from a greater understanding of health and safety.

In Memoriam: David Kelley



It was during this time that David was diagnosed as HIV-positive. He spoke openly about his health status and many will recall his name from a story published in **topical** about Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (probably one of the first on the topic) and how it has affected our colleagues in the OPS.

In 1991, David was seconded to the Ontario AIDS Bureau at the Ministry of Health. From there, he was seconded to the post of executive director for the Toronto Persons With AIDS (PWA) Foundation, from which he retired in November 1994.

David devoted his life and energy to helping others. Among his myriad volunteer activities was the establishment of Positive Youth Outreach, a unique youth-run group which continues to provide empowerment and support for HIV-positive youth aged 15 to 25, and public education on AIDS.

His colleagues, co-workers and the youth he worked with remember his warmth, his charm and his strength of character as well as his unflagging commitment to fairness and empowerment. "He used to say that you can get the best out of kids — out of anybody. Just give them a clear idea of what you expect of them, and expect the best," says his partner, Tom Stewart. "And it worked."

David was presented with the Pink Trillium Humanitarian Award in 1994. At the time of his death, he was co-chair of the Ontario Government's Committee on AIDS, to which he had been appointed by the Minister of Health.

Besides his partner of 19 years, Tom Stewart, he is survived by his mother Hazel, brothers Richard and Keith and his sister Debbie.

David Kelley passed away April 25, 1996 at the age of 44. David is remembered by many ministry staff for his work with child and youth issues in the Toronto Area Office and above all as a member of the Office of Child and Family Service Advocacy.

David first worked as an outreach worker for hard-to-serve youth with Ottawa Youth Services Bureau after receiving his degree in cultural geography at Carleton University. His commitment to children and youth remained with him all his life. When he and his partner, Tom Stewart, moved to Toronto, David joined Central Toronto Youth Services as a support worker and counsellor.

In 1980, David played the title role in the 30-minute documentary, **Michael, A Gay Son**. This award-winning film is still shown in secondary and post-secondary schools in Canada and the U.S. In 1981, David co-founded the Toronto Counselling Centre for Lesbians and Gays.

After that, David moved on to Children's Services in the Toronto Area Office of MCSS, and later took the job that describes him best when he officially became a child advocate.

Jim's hitting the road

Jim Lawrie is hitting the road again after 28 years and 11 months in the Ontario Public Service.

But you won't find him behind the wheel of the 1974 Corvette he owns — he's more likely to be under it, since he's currently restoring the vintage sports car.

Jim retired on May 29 from the ministry's Inventory/Fleet Co-ordination Unit at Queen's Park. He started out as a stock boy with the then-Department of Highways on July 4, 1967.

You've got the wrong idea if you think inventory is a ho-hum job. In his time, Jim travelled to the James Bay area to inventory air bases that were being turned into emergency air strip facilities, audited Canadian National



The Lawrie family at Jim's retirement party: children Sherry, Chris, wife Linda, Jim and daughter Nicole.

railway assets when they were being turned over to GO Transit, and re-distributed the assets from the Ontario pavilion at Vancouver's Expo '86.

Jim joined our ministry in July of 1989. "The bonus," he says, "is enjoying what you're doing in your work." Looking after our fleet of vehicles, among other tasks, was fun.

dialogue

Ontario Community and Social Services

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